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Cotton Insecticide Situation

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Four growing seasons have passed since the last peak of boll weevil activity occurred in 1949 and 1950. The estimated percentage reduction from full yield of cotton for the Cotton Belt was 17.5 in 1949 and 22.6 in 1950. In each of the three following years it did not rise above 6.7. The percentage reduction for 1954 has not yet been estimated but may have been lower than any year in the last decade. Up to 1950, peaks in boll weevil activity occurred every 4 to 6 years.

States in which the boll weevil was most destructive in 1951 were Arkansas and Louisiana. In 1952 no State suffered unusually from this insect. In 1953 boll weevil attack was severe in Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas. In 1954 drouth in much of the Cotton Belt kept the insect from developing heavy populations and caused a reduction in sales of cotton insecticides there. Sales are said to have been generally high in the West, however.

Consumption of Cotton Insecticides of the Boll-Weevil Type in Terms of Field Strength Dust Equivalent

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Millions of Pounds</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1949 | 161 |
| 1950 | 502 |
| 1951 | 622 |
| 1952 | 366 |
| 1953 | 301 |
| 1954 | not available |

Insecticides would have been used in larger quantities in 1950 if they had been available. In 1951 purchases were high because of the fear of continued shortages.

A survey is underway to determine the stocks of insecticides in the possession of manufacturers, including formulators, as of September 30, 1954, compared to those held on the same date in 1953. On the basis of incomplete returns it appears that stocks of cotton insecticides owned by firms in the Cotton Belt may be slightly greater now than a year ago. This

situation is in contrast to an overall reduction in insecticide inventories for the entire United States of about 25 percent. It is believed that stocks for the country as a whole may be fairly normal at the present time.

Though inventories of some of the technical chemicals that enter into mixtures intended for use on cotton are lower this fall, this is the result of adjustments from an over-stocked position. Ample capacity exists for the manufacture of these materials so that producers can step-up their output as demand from formulators warrants. As always, those growers who purchase at least their minimum requirements ahead of the rush, will insure themselves against the occurrence of unforeseeable epidemics of pests elsewhere in the country that may drain supplies away at a critical time.

Attention is directed to an article published in "Agricultural Chemicals" for January, 1954, which contains background data on many aspects of the problem of cotton insecticide requirements. Reprints of this article, however, are not available.



